

magazine. Let me read the first paragraph.

The roots of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal lie not in the criminal inclinations of a few Army reservists, but in a decisions approved last year by Secretary of War Donald Rumsfeld to expand a highly secret operation which has been focused on the hunt for al Qaeda.

He wanted to move it over to Iraq. "Rumsfeld's decisions embittered the American intelligence community, damaged the effectiveness of the elite combat units, and hurt America's prospect in the war on terror."

This one paragraph alone ought to be enough to have the Republicans on their feet demanding an investigation. Instead, Republican leaders in this House remained silent as each new revelation damages U.S. credibility around the world, not to mention the morale of our soldiers.

The stories place Rumsfeld, Under Secretary Stephen Cambone, and Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz in the decision-making roles in the scandal. Is that true? The American people and the world need to know.

Denials by Rumsfeld's spokesman will not silence the calls for truth. Indeed, if Secretary Rumsfeld has no prior knowledge, he ought to be the first person demanding an impartial inquiry by the House of Representatives. The time has come for full disclosure, not carefully orchestrated photo ops.

I call on the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives to begin an impartial and open investigation into the atrocities that occurred in Iraq. The American people are resilient. They are resilient enough to face the truth. So is everyone else who has nothing to hide.

ARE YOU BETTER OFF NOW THAN YOU WERE FOUR YEARS AGO?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, between now and the end of this session of Congress I will continue to ask the question, Are you better off than you were 4 years ago? And I think whether you answer that question by reference to war and peace or education or access to health care or any number of topics, the answer is clearly no. But tonight I would like to answer that question specifically by reference to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush took office, he inherited a \$236 billion budget surplus and an economy that had created 22 million jobs during the 8 years of the Clinton administration, 1.6 million jobs in the half-year alone.

When President Bush took office the projected budget surpluses were enough to cover the costs of Social Security during the baby boomers' retirement years, and the country was experiencing the biggest drop in child pov-

erty in a generation and the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. Four years later under President Bush, the President is looking to create his first net job. Meanwhile, 8.2 million Americans are looking for work. The unemployment rate is 30 percent higher than it was when President Clinton left office; 2.2 million private sector jobs have been cut on President Bush's watch; and 2.7 million manufacturing jobs have been shed.

One of the major reasons for the current jobs recession is the increased exporting of high-paying white and blue collar jobs overseas. Consider several examples from the township of Edison, the largest town in my congressional district. Earlier this year the Ford plant closed leaving more than 900 New Jersey employees without jobs. Last year the Frigidaire air conditioner plant closed in Edison and shifted production to Brazil leaving 1,600 unemployed residents in Edison.

You would think the Bush administration would be concerned about these job losses; however, President Bush and his economic advisers view the movement of American factory jobs and white collar work to other countries as a positive transformation that will in the end enrich our economy. And for those Americans who have jobs, many have seen their household incomes decrease over the last 4 years by an average of almost \$1,500.

These cuts in income coupled with skyrocketing increases in insurance, health care, gas prices at a 23-year high, and college tuition increases averaging 28 percent have made it extremely difficult for middle-class Americans to make ends meet. And yet the President tours around the Nation touting his accomplishments. Based on these numbers, how can President Bush say America's middle class is better off now than it was 4 years ago? He simply cannot.

Consider, Mr. Speaker, also the government spends \$900,000 more each minute than it takes in thanks to a historic reversal in fortune during the last 4 years. Under President Bush's guidance and the policies of the Republican Congress, we have gone from historic surpluses to historic deficits, numbering in the \$400 billion range this year alone.

My friends on the other side of the aisle say it is not their fault that a war, a recession and a terrorist attack are to blame. I have actually heard them call it the perfect storm. But those excuses, in my opinion, ring hollow. Republicans are in charge of the White House and both Houses of Congress. So what are they doing about the challenges facing Americans? Absolutely nothing.

Do Republicans have a plan to create jobs or to reduce the deficit? No. Do they have a plan to stop the outsourcing of American jobs like those at the Ford and Frigidaire plants in my district? No. The only thing they seem to have a plan for is giving tax cuts to those who need them least.

Americans are facing record job losses, record deficits and record debt, and yet President Bush's only economic answer seems to be more tax cuts.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it is time the Bush administration realizes that shipping jobs overseas and cutting taxes for the wealthiest elite in our country will not create jobs. President Bush and Congressional Republicans have had 4 years to turn this jobs recession around, and they have failed.

Democrats, on the other hand, are fighting to create economic opportunity for all Americans. Republicans are just standing in the way. So I ask once again, are we better off than we were 4 years ago? The answer certainly with regard to the economy is a resounding no. And I think we can say that for so many other aspects of what we have experienced here in the last 4 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

JUSTIFIABLE COMPENSATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I probably will not take the full 5 minutes because I am going to be joining my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), a little later for a Special Order. But there was something that I wanted to point out that I think is relevant to every one of us who serves in this body.

Following the exposure of the prisoner abuse in the prison in Baghdad, our Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, has said that he believes that the prisoners who were abused should be compensated by our government.

Now, I do not have any real problem with that if in fact the abuse can be verified. But what puzzles me greatly is the fact that there have been other prisoners held in captivity in that part of the world, and I am talking about American prisoners, American POWs, who were held during the first Gulf War by the Iraqi regime and some 16 of those ex-prisoners who were held by the Iraqi regime and treated terribly. They have described the abuse they endured while they were being held during that first Gulf War, and following